

SEMANTIC REPRESENTATION OF THE CONCEPTUAL ENTITY *RELIGION* IN ENGLISH (ON THE MATERIAL OF THE BOOK “THE DA VINCI CODE” BY DAN BROWN)

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У статті розглядаються питання мовної репрезентації ідеї RELIGION в англійській мові. Проаналізовано семантичну структуру фрейму на позначення релігійних понять в англійській мові.

Ключові слова: концептуальна єдність, лексична одиниця, семантична структура, концепт

The paper deals with the questions of language representation of the conceptual entity RELIGION in English. The structure of the frame used to depict the religious experience of a man in English has been analyzed.

Keywords: conceptual entity, lexical unit, semantic structure, concept

„... every faith in the world is based on fabrication...”

Dan Brown

From a theoretical point of view the issue of studying lexical means of the conceptual worldview representation has been attracting much attention from linguists. In the researches the conventional meaning associated with a word is often referred to more technically as a semantic representation, semantic unit or lexical concept. In modern linguistics, word meanings are held to be conceptual entities, which are to say, they are held to constitute mental units, paired with phonetically-realizable forms, and stored in semantic memory. The repository of such form-meaning pairings forms a structured inventory which is commonly referred to as the mental lexicon. The recent researches conducted by such prominent scientists as Askoldov, Evans, Karasyk, Kubryakova, Lakoff, Stepanov, have made a great contribution into describing the language picture of the world, classifying conceptual entities according to the spheres of different human activities and presenting various methods of semantic and cognitive analysis.

Nowadays philosophically deep lexical concepts rightly deserve a ground linguistic analysis so the topicality of the proposed research is predefined by the fact that there is still the need of

systematic study and clarification of the language representation of the concept RELIGION in the modern English language.

The object of our research is the conceptual entity RELIGION as a complicated system of notions, which accumulate religious knowledge of the Englishmen. The subject of the investigation is the language actualization of the idea RELIGION in English researched on the material of the novel "The da Vinci Code" written by Dan Brown. The aim of our research is to give a systematic analysis of the language representation of the concept RELIGION in English. The objectives of our work are the following: to set a conceptual structure of the concept RELIGION in English, to define the correlation of its structural components and to build the linguistic model of the concept RELIGION in the English language picture of the world.

The material under analysis has been investigated based on two main approaches to modeling the nature of the semantic representations, as conceptual structures: network analyses and componential analysis. The componential analysis considers the word meanings to be made up of atomic elements or components. An early componential-style analysis was that developed by Katz and colleagues (Katz and Fodor 1963; Katz and Postal 1964; Katz 1972). In this account word meanings consist of semantic markers and distinguishers when semantic markers consist of the information shared by words, while distinguishers constitute the idiosyncratic information specific to a given word meaning.

The semantic network analyses developed within the framework of cognitive linguistics (see Evans 2004; Lakoff 1987; Tyler and Evans 2003). The researches in this method emphasise the prototype structure of words, which can be modelled in terms of a radiating frame structure, with lexical items conceptualised as categories of distinct related senses, which exhibit typicality effects (see Evans and Green 2006). Philosophically interesting abstract lexical concepts as TRUTH, GOODNESS, FREEDOM, JUSTICE and RELIGION generally exhibit some sort of definitional structure.

In particular, in our research we consider the entity of lexical means to manifest the idea RELIGION to be represented, on both levels – on a level of semantic structure which is purely linguistic in nature, known as the lexical concept, and a level of non-linguistic encyclopedic representation, known as the cognitive model. The latter one, as a discrete unit representing collective consciousness of the English native speakers about the spiritual culture of a man in his mental lexicon, is manifested in the meaning of the words, used to describe various ideas of the religious knowledge.

In our research the concept is viewed as a mental formation with a complicated structure made to cover the totality of the religious knowledge, experience of a man and his spiritual values (reflected in the lexicon of the novel by D. Brown). The conceptual entity RELIGION has been modeled in terms of a frame structure with lexical items (300 words and word-combinations) conceptualized the stereotypical human perception of the idea RELIGION in English. The analyzed lexicon is considered as a language manifestation of the concept RELIGION, which is represented in English in the frame containing slots and subslots, which embrace semantic and associative means to postulate the idea RELIGION in human mentality and to indicate understanding of the religious knowledge by:

- the **Average people** (presented by 62 lexemes in the body of the analyzed material, 20,7%) (e.g.: *God, an abbe, a priest, a bishop, a monk, a disciple, a victim, a churchgoer*: "I have no concerns for my own safety. *God* is with me").

- people engaged into religious service (**Men of God**) (this slot includes 70 items, it is 23,3% of the whole investigated material) (e.g.: *Opus Dei, The Cult of Christ, God's mafia, men of God, a debt, mortification*: "... and women were forced to endure additional requirements of corporal *mortification*... all as added penance for original sin...").

- by people deeply interested in the religious mystery (the slot **Interested people**) (78 lexemes, 26%) (e.g.: *the Tribe of Benjamin, the Merovingian bloodline, the Virgin Mary, the Venus, the pre-Christian God Mithras*: "Rosa rugosa, one of the oldest species of rose, had five petals and pentagonal symmetry, just like the guiding star of *Venus*, giving the Rose strong iconographic ties to womanhood").

- the circle of people who guard the Religious Truth (**Secret society**) (90 lexemes, what makes 30%) (e.g.: *the Grail story, the wisdom, the Womanhood, the womb, the wronged Queen, the Priory of Sion, Priory doctrine*: “For a moment, he thought he heard a woman's voice... the *wisdom* of the ages... whispering up from the chasms of the earth”).

Making an attempt to understand the essential characteristics of the concept RELIGION the lexical units under analysis were classified according to their categorical meaning expressed in different parts of the speech. Due to the analysis the slots in the frame RELIGION are characterized by the following features:

- the slot **Average people** is mainly nominative, as 48 nouns to reflect religious objects and notions are found in it (e.g.: *myrrh, frankincense, gold, hatred, peace, love, nonviolence*);
- the slot **Men of God** is characterized by a bigger number of verbs (15 lexemes) in its structure (e.g.: *to endure, to indoctrinate, to kneel, to lie, to mislead, to mock*). It means that the lexical units presented there indicate different processes in religious services and activities;
- the slot **Interested people** contains 62 nouns, what means that the slot is nominative (e.g. *divinity, Jesus, Christ, ministry, the blueprint, a prophet*) and exhibits the intention of the author to differentiate similar religious objects and divide up the same reality in different ways by drawing borderlines between specific religious referents and words;
- The slot **Secret society** is descriptive as it contains a number adjectives and adverbs (23 lexemes: e.g. *the strangest, ancient, ethereal, false, carefully, ingeniously, magically*) which add specific connotations to the literary text in order to depict emotional and emphatic characteristics of the religious services.

Taking into consideration the fact that the frame under analysis is mainly nominative we find it necessary to highlight that the total number of proper names among all nouns is 56 lexemes what makes 19% of all lexical units selected. They are used as proper names known to **Average people** indicating:

- people (*God, Devil, Messiah, Adam, Eve, Jesus Christ*);
- buildings (*Roslin Chapel*);
- religious objects (*Cup of Christ, the Star of David*);
- books (*the New Testament, the Old Testament, the Bible, the Gospel*);

We can record that the list of proper names in the slot **Secret society** consists of:

- names and pseudonyms of important religious symbols (*Mary Magdalene, Matrimonio, the Rose, the Sangreal, the Wronged Queen*);
- names of secret societies (*the Priory of Sion*);
- secreted religious documents (*the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Coptic Scrolls*).

As a result of the study it may be revealing to see that proper names used in the novel (mostly nouns and noun phrases) refer to hidden religious notions probably for increasing concern of the readers interested in solving the secrets of the Religious Truth.

Due to the Askoldov classification of concepts into cognitive and artistic [1], we came to the conclusion that the concept RELIGION is the artistic concept, as it is:

- individual and psychologically complicated;
- is a complex structure used to describe feelings, desires and the irrational;
- gravitates to potential symbols and is free from the scopes of logical determination.

As the concept RELIGION is an individual artistic concept and gravitates to potential symbols' realization it includes the components used by the author to identify and describe related religious ideas through diverse lexical chains. For example:

- emperor – Constantine the Great – lifelong pagan*;
- the Bible – a product of man*;
- the number PHI – Divine Proportion*.

Such lexical chains show the intention of the author to show the diversity in the human comprehension of the Religious Truth and to enlighten the religious mystery for people of different layers of the society. For example: „*The blade and chalice. Fused as one. The Star of David... the perfect union of male and female... Solomon's Seal... marking the Holy of Holies, ...*”.

In the process of modeling the frame RELIGION based on the corpus of lexical means found in the novel "The da Vinci Code" it has been noticed that the author makes the secret of Mary

Magdalene the main mystery not only of the novel in particular but of the religious concept in general. The total number of the lexical items to manifest the symbol of Mary Magdalene (e.g. *Sangreal, Royal Blood, Matrimonio, the Chalice, the Holy Grail, the Rose*) distinguished in the text is 11 lexical items. For example: „*Because her name was forbidden by the Church, Mary Magdalene became secretly known by many pseudonyms—the Chalice, the Holy Grail, and the Rose*”. As a result we can make an assumption that the words and word-combinations used to depict the mystery of Mary Magdalene manifest the diverse attitude of all religious people to the controversial symbol of Mary Magdalene. This brings us to the main point, which is simply that the symbol of Mary Magdalene is used by the author as an imaginary spiral – a nuclear linking element to make the slots **Average people, Men of God, Interested people** and **Secret society** into one unit.

Following the prominent linguist Karasyk [6], who suggested analysis of the concepts as separate operative units of different scopes, the concept RELIGION can be represented in the model consisting of:

- *an active layer;* • *a passive layer;* • *a hidden form of the concept.*

The active layer of the concept RELIGION is presented by the slot **Average people**; the slot **Men of God** makes the passive layer of the concept under analysis. The hidden form of the concept is reflected by the slots **Interested people** and **Secret society** what shows that the conceptual entity under study conceptualize many religious facts hidden from the general perception.

We can make a presupposition that the structure of the artistic concept RELIGION presented in the frame can be clearly outlined as an iceberg and be conditionally divided into the "surface" (active and passive layers of the concept model) and "secreted" ideas of RELIGION perception (the hidden form of the concept). The "surface" ideas show the orthodox structure of the religion, revealing known and clear religious facts that deeply influence people and dictate the rules of the social life. "Secreted" judgments influence from within, through human mentality, and address forming individual perception of the Religious Truth.

As a result of the analysis we can come to the standpoint that the analysed conceptual entity RELIGION represented in the English language is an individually specific cultural construct which encodes Dan Brown's personal interpretation of the Religious Truth that partly departs from the traditional survey. Probably now people need new paradigms, new ways of thinking about who God is and what he really wants from us. Very often people think the best way to do that is to make up fables about how the old stories are not really true, and then start to believe their own fictions as “...every faith in the world is based on fabrication...”.

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